

Cash Assets Other 154 **Current Assets** 30.8 29.1 40.0 Accts Payable Debt Due 19.3 55.8 23.3 27.2 24.1 40.7 19.3 14.5 Current Liab. 94.4 65.0 80.5

ANNUAL RATES Past Est'd '17-'19 Past 10 Yrs. of change (per sh) 5 Yrs. to '23-'25 Revenues "Cash Flow" 2.0% 6.0% 8.0% 2.5% 9.5% 2.0% 4.5% 6.0% Earnings 12.0% 5.5% 1.5% Dividends Book Value 6.0%

Cal- endar			VENUES (Sep. 30		Full Year
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021	30.1 31.2 30.7 31.8 33.0	33.0 34.9 33.4 36.0 37.0	36.2 38.7 37.8 42.0 44.0	33.3 32.7 35.2	130.8 138.1 134.6 145 150
Cal- endar			ER SHARI Sep. 30		Full Year
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021	.27 .27 .39 .44 .45	.33 .52 .49 .50 . 52	.66	.32 .43 .46 .47 .50	1.38 1.96 2.01 2.10 2.20
Cal- endar			/IDENDS P. Sep.30		Full Year
2016 2017 2018 2019 2020	.21125	.22375 .24	.21125 .22375 .24	.22375	

and operation of regulated water utility systems in New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. It also operates water and wastewater systems under contract on behalf of municipal and private clients in NJ and DE. Its Middlesex System provides water services to 61,000 retail customers, primarily in Middlesex County, New Jersey. In

Middlesex Water Company etched a fresh all-time high over the June interim. To no surprise, the regulated utility, though not completely immune to broader market turbulence, has held up better than most year to date. In fact, investors bid up shares of MSEX to record levels, as the equity surpassed the \$70-per-share mark in recent trading sessions. Based on our Timeliness Ranking System, Middlesex stock is a favorable selection (2) for relative year-ahead price performance, and ought to appeal to shortterm subscribers.

The first quarter was a good one. Revenues of \$31.8 million, which fell in line with our \$32.0 million call, expanded nearly 4% year over year, thanks to increased water demand and a growing customer base in its Delaware operations. Marchperiod earnings of \$0.44 beat our estimate by \$0.04, advancing 13% from the previous-year figure. We are maintaining our current-year top- and bottom-line forecasts of \$145 million and \$2.10 per share, respectively. Our optimistic projections for the next few quarters factor in several tailwinds spurred by the COVID-19

nues. At 12/31/19, the company had 352 employees. Incorporated: NJ. President, CEO, and Chairman: Dennis W. Doll. Officers & directors own 3.1% of the com. stock; BlackRock Inst. Trust Co., 7.7% (4/20 proxy). Add.: 485 C Route 1 South, Suite 400, Iselin, NJ 08830. Tel.: 732-634-1500. Int.: www.middlesexwater.com.

pandemic. These include a notable increase in the frequency of hand washing, as well as an uptick in appliance usage due to a greater percentage of residents staying at home. In addition, the uncertainty of public summer activities appears to have sparked demand for backyard pools of late, which augurs well for near-term water consumption.

The company's long-term infrastructure upgrade plans are still intact. Middlesex encountered minimal disruption to current projects, even at the height of the crisis, and should fully exhaust its \$300 million budget under its Water for Tomorrow program, which aims to bolster the company's distribution systems.

Buy-and-hold accounts should remain on the sidelines, for now. At the recent quotation, MSEX shares are trading beyond the upper boundary of our 3- to 5year Target Price Range, even after applying a more generous P/E multiple. In fact, seasoned investors may want to consider taking some profits off the table. The issue probably won't appeal to income-seekers, either.

Nicholas P. Patrikis

July 10, 2020

(A) Diluted earnings. Next earnings report due late July.

(B) Dividends historically paid in mid-Feb., May, Aug., and November. ■ Div'd reinvestment plan available.

Price Growth Persistence

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability B++ 80 **Earnings Predictability** 75